



State of Connecticut

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Transportation Committee Public Hearing
Testimony in support of HB 5385 AAC the Use of Ignition Interlock Devices
Dan Debicella, State Senator, 21st District
March 3, 2010

Good morning Chairmen Defronzo and Guerrera, Ranking Members Boucher and Scribner. Thank you for raising HB 5385, *An Act Concerning the Use of Interlock Ignition Devices*. I am in full support of enacting legislation on this issue, and I have proposed or co-sponsored similar bills each of the past three sessions.

This bill allows offenders an alternative to the current one-year license suspension for a first DWI conviction: a six-month license suspension followed by a requirement to drive only ignition interlock-equipped vehicles for one year. One of the key points is that any offender choosing this alternative is held responsible for the processing and administrative costs related to compliance with the law.

Other states such as New Mexico have proven that ignition interlock devices keep a substantial amount of repeat offenders off the road. I believe that Connecticut should follow their lead and make the streets of our state safer for everyone.

On a personal note, I have been personally affected by this issue. My father-in-law was killed by a drunk driver, so my family has felt first-hand the ramifications of driving under the influence. I want to prevent further accidents of this nature to ensure that more families do not have to endure what my wife and her family went through. For this reason, I support increased penalties for drunk drivers in addition to ignition interlock devices.

I appreciate the work this committee did last session in passing SB 151, *An Act Concerning the Use of Ignition Interlock Devices in Motor Vehicles*, which was significantly similar to this bill. I was happy to co-sponsor this bill that passed all

necessary legislative committees but unfortunately died on the Senate calendar. I am hopeful that we can work in a bipartisan manner to ensure that does not happen again this year.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee for hearing my testimony. I hope the committee will look favorable upon this bill so that we can begin improving the safety of our roads and highways and protecting our families from careless drunk drivers. I look forward to working with the committee to guide this bill through the legislative process.